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ABSTRACT

One hundred and sixty-eight elementary students with and without handicapping conditions participated in a study to determine the social integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities who are academically mainstreamed for at least one period daily. Ss were asked to photograph what they considered illustrative of their schools. A thematic content analysis of students' descriptions of their pictures was performed. Preliminary analysis of the data suggested that students with handicapping conditions are not socially integrated when they are academically mainstreamed. Very few pictures of the mainstream and its student population were taken by special class pupils, and even fewer pictures of the special education population were taken by control Ss. Students in resource rooms showed the most variance in types of pictures taken, and appeared to bridge the regular and special education groups. Conclusions note the existence of parallel special education and non-special education subcultures in the school. Appendixes contain a picture sorting record form and picture sorting handbook. (Author/CL)

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THE SCHOOL WORLD

of

STUDENTS WITH M.LD TO MODERATE HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

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and

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Hofstra University

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ABSTRACT

One hundred and sixty-eight elementary level students with and without handicapping conditions participated in a study on "mainstreaming". The study sought, in part, to determine whether students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions who are academically mainstreamed for at least one period per day are socially integrated - or at least perceive themselves to be socially part of the mainstream.

Each of the youngsters were asked to photograph that which they considered illustrative of their schools. A thematic content analysis of the students' descriptions of their pictures was conducted. A preliminary analysis of the data suggests that students with handicapping conditions are not socially integrated when they are academically mainstreamed. In addition, there is an indication that there are two parallel sub-cultures in the school: the special education sub-culture and the non-special education sub-culture.

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PL94-142, The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, mandated that students with handicapping conditions be placed in the least restrictive alternative in which their educational needs could be served appropriately. A major intent of the law was "the greater inclusion of youngsters with handicapping conditions into the mainstream of school life" (Reynolds & Birch, 1977). Implementation of PL94-142 caused great changes in the public schools' environments (Reynolds, 1980). Physical mainstreaming, the actual housing of students with handicapping conditions in public schools, and academic mainstreaming, the enrollment of students with handicapping conditions in non-special education classes, brought about many of these changes. For example, approximately 70% of all students with handicapping conditions are placed, for at least a portion of their school day, in a non-special education program (Lakin & Reynolds, 1983). Teachers who have never had any experience with students with handicapping conditions are now directly involved with academically mainstreamed youngsters (Campbell, Dobson, & Bost, 1985).

Johnson and Johnson (1980) developed a definition which includes all aspects of the concept:

Mainstreaming is the provision of an appropriate educa-

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> tional opportunity for all handicapped [sic] in the least restrictive alternative, based on individualized education programs, with procedural safeguards and parent involvement, and aimed at providing handicapped students [sic] with access to and constructive interaction with non-handicapped peers (p.12).

There are three components which make up a complete and effective mainstreaming experience: physical, academic, and social. A pupil with a handicapping condition might be enrolled in a special self-contained class located in a public school. This student is physically mainstreamed; s/he might not be involved academically or socially with pupils without handicapping conditions. A student with a handicapping condition may, however, be allowed access to a non-special education class; s/he would be physically and academically mainstreamed. The youngster would be excluded by her/his classmates without handicapping conditions from the social component of the mainstream experience (Axelrod, 1982; Gresham, 1982; Gresham, 1984; Harrison, 1982; Lipson & Alden, 1983; Reynolds, 1977). When a placement allows the student with a handicapping condition to be isolated in any manner, s/he is not involved in an effective mainstream activity (Johnson & Johnson, 1980).

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There appear to be barriers blocking the student with a handicapping condition from fully accessing the mainstream community of the school. The pupil may be physically and academically mainstreamed but excluded from the social component of the experience by her/his classmates without handicapping conditions. A lack of positive interaction between the students has been documented. The pupils with handicapping conditions often are accepted poorly and usually considered the least popular of students (Allen, 1980; Barclay & Kehli, 1979; Custer & Osguthorpe, 1983; Forness, Morrison, & MacMillian, 1983; Gerber, 1982; Gresham, 1982; Harrel, 1982; Leyser & Gottleib, 1981; Maddux & Maddux, 1983; Semmel & Cheney, 1979; Woodward, 1980). Research has suggested that students with learning disabilities and other mild to moderate handicapping conditions have lowered abilities to perceive nonverbal social cues, contributing to a pattern of behavior different from the norm, and resulting in poor acceptance by pupils without handicapping conditions (Axelrod, 1982; Gresham, 1982; Gresham, 1984; Harrison, 1982; Lipson & Alden, 1983). In any case, pupils with handicapping conditions are often perceived of as "different" by schoolmates without handicapping conditions and this perception of difference appears to be closely related to, if not the cause of, the exclusion of certain pupils from complete mainstream

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activities.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether pupils with mild to moderate handicapping conditions, who apparently are excluded from complete access to the school community by their schoolmates without handicapping conditions, see see themselves as socially mainstreamed when they are academically mainstreamed for at least one period of the school day. The research is a directed inquiry; it seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How do students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions see the school?

2. Do students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions who are physically and academically mainstreamed see the school differently from their classmates who have not been identified as possessing handicapping conditions?

3. Do students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions who are physically and academically mainstreamed see themselves as included in the social world of the school?

PROCEDURE

Research Method. The students involved in this study were provided with instamatic cameras and asked to photograph that which they considered illustrative of their school. Researchers who have used cameras in a similar manner have suggested that such a technique provides

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information on how the photographers see their own worlds (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The use of photography has been increasing steadily in sociology and anthropology for research and is beginning to be utilized by educational researchers (Damico, 1982). Freund (1974) wrote:

> The camera has become an instrument of major significance to our society. Its inherent ability to transcribe external reality gives it documentary validity - it is, seemingly, both accurate and unbiased...The importance of photography does not rest primarily in its potential as art form, but rather in its ability to shape our ideas, to influence our behavior, and to define our society (pp. 4-5).

In Damico's report of her research on the photographs of Black and White students (1982), the studies of Ziller and associates on photographers' perceptual worlds were cited, along with the conclusion, "The photographic approach overcomes some of the shortcomings of verbal self-reports in communicating perceptions of the environment, thereby facilitating the revelation of orientations of which the subject may be only dimly aware" (pp. 3-4). Damico's study supported Ziller's conclusion: Photographs taken by Black and White youngsters provided insights into aspects of their social and educational worlds which had previously eluded researchers.

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It is conceivable then, that photographs taken by students with and without handicapping conditions will provide us with new information on the school world of all students.

Sample. Three groups of students who are in third, fourth, or fifth grade or age appropriate for placement in these grade levels make up the sample. The total sample consists of 168 students.

The control group is comprised of third, fourth, and fifth graders who have not been identified as possessing handicapping conditions and who have never been involved in, or referred for, special educational services of any form including remedial education.

A second group is comprised of third, fourth, and fifth graders who have been identified as possessing handicapping conditions to the extent that supplementary special education is required. These youngsters are receiving their supplementary special education in resource rooms. Each youngster is provided with at least three hours weekly of resource room service; no one is spending more than 50% of her/his school day in the resource room.

Pupils with handicapping conditions who require primary special education in one or more areas and are placed in special classes because of this need make up the third group. Each youngster in this group is academically mainstreamed for

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at least one period per day. Distribution of the sample population among the 5 participating school districts is illustrated in Table One.

The sample population was chosen by the participating school districts' administrative staff after the researcher explained the research design and the sample's parameters to them. The parameters were that the youngsters be in either the third, fourth, or fifth grade, or age appropriate for placement in these grades, be either in a special class and have at least one academic mainstreaming experience daily, a resource room for part of the school day, or in a non-special class and never referred for any special educational service, and if identified as possessing a handicapping condition (the students in special class or resource room), be labeled as learning disabled and/or emotionally disturbed. Students identified as physically handicapped and/or mentally retarded were not to be included in the sample. The researcher was given access to the students' folders to ensure that the pupils fit into the sample groups appropriately.

A random sample was not made. It is a matter of interest, however, that the resource room and special class students participating in the study usually represented the entire eligible population of a target school.

A deliberate sampling for heterogeneity was conducted in

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TABLE ONE

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE

	DISTRICT				
GROUP	1	2	3	4	5
CONTROL	0	11	11	29	15
RESOURCE	3	7	10	0	5
SPECIAL	15	9	19	20	11

n=165

Note. Districts 1, 2, and 5 are elementary school districts (grades K - 6); District 3 is organized according to a junior high school model; District 4 is organized according to a middle school paradigm. Districts 1 and 5 share a common central high school.

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order to replace some of the external validity lost as a result of the nonrandom sample selection. According to Cook and Campbell (1979), deliberate sampling for heterogenity does not require random sampling at any stage in the sampling design. It does require, however, that target classes of persons and settings are defined and that a wide range of instances for each class be represented by the design. In a deliberate sampling for heterogenity, at least one instance of sampling should be representative of the typical, and at least one instance representing each of the extremes (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

Table Two provides information in the distribution of the student population in each of the participating school districts. The districts vary in the size of their student populations as well as in the percent-age of students with handicapping conditions identified within the pupil population. In Nassau County (Long Island, New York), District 3 has the largest percentage of pupils with handicapping conditions; District 2 has the smallest percentage; and the percentage of students with handicapping conditions in District 1 is in line with Nassau County and New York State norms. District 4 is the largest school district in Nassau County, in terms of numbers of students served, and educates the most students with handicapping conditions; Districts 2

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TABLE TWO

DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT STUDENT POPULATION

	DISTRICT				
STUDENT POP.	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL	1580	1702	2956	8288	1793
TOTAL W/HC	159	62	625	1148	180
PERCENT. W/HC	11.0	4.0	21.0	14.0	10.0
PERCENT. W/HC IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS	92.0	72.0	92.0	93.0	95.0

Note. W/HC = Students with Handicapping Conditions.

Note. 2 Student enrollment figures including information on students with handicapping conditions was taken from December 1983 reports submitted by the districts to the New York State Education Department.

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and 5 are the smallest districts in Nassau County and District 2 has one of the smallest special education programs in the County. Furthermore, in District 3, minority pupils comprise 80% of the student population while in Districts 1 and 2 minority pupils make ip less that 2% of the student population.

Data Collection. The data was collected over a period of six weeks. Two days were spent in each research site; the researcher met with staff members to explain the study. provided direction to the student photographers, was available during the photography sessions for questions and technical help, and interviewed the pupils about the content of their developed pictures.

The researcher met with small groups of students. They were given the following instructions verbally:

> Pretend you are writing to a pen pal whom you have never met. In your letter, you decide that it would help to include a group of photographs of your school. That is what you will be doing today - taking the pictures you would send in your letter. Since I am not familiar with your school, when the pictures are developed I am going to come back to talk with you about what you have photographed. At that time, I will give you copies of your pictures to keep.

The students were permitted to ask questions about the

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assignment. The answers were clarifications of the task.

Each student received an instamatic camera for up to one hour of use. They were given access to all parts of the school. Each student had eleven pictures to shoot. The cameras were loaded with 12 - exposure color film and the first picture on each roll was an identification shot of the photographer.

Within 48 hours of each session, the researcher returned to the site and interviewed photographers about the subjects of their pictures. Individually, the students reviewed their photos with the researcher and answered the question, "What is this a picture of?" This was the only question that was asked. Their answers were recorded verbatim under the photographs which had previously been mounted on index cards. At the interviews' conclusions, youngsters were given copies of their pictures to keep.

Pilot. A kindergarten through grade twelve central school district in Suffolk County (Long Island), New York was used to pilot the study. The total student enrollment of this district was 4300 (May 1984) with 346 pupils identified as possessing handicapping conditions to the extent that special education is required. Of the 346 pupils with handicapping conditions, 289 are placed in the district's schoolhouses. Thirty third, fourth, and fifth grade pupils comprise the

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pilot sample: ten students with handicapping conditions who are placed in special self-contained classes and who are academically mainstreamed at least one period a day; ten youngsters with handicapping conditions who are receiving their special education in a resource room for approximately 20% of their school week; and ten students who have never been referred for remedial and/or special educational services. Each student was provided with an instamatic camera loaded with 12-exposure color film; each youngster was interviewed about the subject of her/his photographs once the pictures were developed.

The students' photographs were used for two purposes:

1. 150 pictures, randomly selected, were used to establish themes for content analysis. Three volunteer sorters determined the themes. Individually, the sorters developed categories into which they felt the pictures best fell. This was done without any discussion of the photographs. The sorters then discussed the categories they had established and, as a group, decided which themes best reflected the youngsters' pictures. Definitions of each of the theme categories were also developed.

2. The remaining pictures (143) were sorted into the theme groupings in order to determine the appropriateness of the categories. Using the results of this activity, a

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picture sorting record form and handbook was developed (Appendix A).

DATA ANALYSIS

A thematic content analysis was conducted on the photographs. Three volunteers were involved in coding the photographs. The coders were trained in the use of the "School World" picture sorting form the researcher developed using themes that were identified in the pilot study analysis. A handbook describing the sorting procedure (Appendix B) was sent to the sorters two weeks prior to the activity. The actual categorizing of the pictures was preceded by a 15 minute training session led by the researcher using the forms and the photographs taken by youngsters in the pilot sample.

Results.

Preliminary Analysis. A total of 1408 photographs were developed: 633 were shot by youngsters in the control group; 197 were snapped by students who spend part of their school day in resource room programs; and 578 were taken by pupils in special self-contained classes. The preliminary content analysis of this by the researcher suggests the existence of two parallel groups of youngsters: students with handicapping conditions who are placed in special self-contained classes and pupils who are receiving their education in a 'regular'

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program. Table 3 illustrates the percentage of photographs sorted into each of the three major theme categories as well as into the primary sub-categories.

DISCUSSION

The preliminary analysis indicates that elementary level students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions who are placed in special education self-contained classes for most of their school day see the school in very much the same way, in terms of the types of pictures taken, as do youngsters who have never been identified as in need of any special educational services. The pictures, however, are of special education related subjects: the special education teachers, the special education rooms, special education classmates, etc. Some subjects were shared with the control group; both groups took pictures of special area staff (gym, art, and music), the office and office staff, and the principal. There were very few pictures of the 'mainstream' and its student population taken by special class pupils with handicapping conditions. There were even less pictures taken of the 'special education' population by youngsters in the control group.

Students placed in resource rooms for a portion of their school day showed the most variance in the types of pictures taken: they took fewer pictures of people and things and more

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TABLE THREE

DISTRIBUTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

	CONTROL	RESOURCE	SPECIAL
THEME			
PEOPLE	.70	.72	.75
Adults	.45	.40	.48
Children	.14	.16	.20
Class	.10	.16	.06
PLACES	.15	.19	.12
Instruct.	.05	.12	.04
Non-instruct.	.11	.07	.08
THINGS	.14	.08	.11
OTHER	.01	<.01	.03

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of instructional places than their peers in the control group or in special classes. They also took photographs of special education and non-special education subjects. Perhaps the youngsters in resource room, because of their many reference groups (resource room, mainstream class, and special area classes), have not developed a strong sense of program identification. In any case, they appear to bridge the two groups.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the preliminary analysis of data. Students with mild to moderate handicapping conditions who are placed in special classes are not fully mainstreamed; they are not part of the social world of their physical and academic mainstream experiences. The intent of PL94-142 has not been fully realized. We no longer have separate educational facilities but we still have segregated schooling. The conclusions reflect only a preliminary analysis of data. The analysis will be refined with subsequent reviews.

The limited amount of research on the effects of mainstreaming on the students involved clearly evinces a need to build a solid data base upon which we can establish valid and supportable theories. Theories that are not closely tied to a wealth of facts about the subjects they propose to explain are not likely to be very useful (Becker, 1963). The most

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persistant difficulty in the study of student perceptions specifically, and student behaviors in general, is a lack of solid data, a limited body of facts and information.

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APPENDIX A

"SCHOOL WORLD"
PICTURE SORTING RECORD FORM

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
Placement _____
DOB _____ M _____ F _____
COMMENTS:

Group _____ Sorter _____ Date _____

SECTION A: PEOPLE

I. ADULTS

a. Non-Instructional

	Named	Unnamed
Principal		
Service Staff		
Office Staff		
School Nurse		

b. Instructional (Teachers)

	Named	Unnamed
Own		
Friend's		
Relative's		
Special Area		
Special Education		
School		

II. CHILDREN

	Named	Unnamed
Relative		
Classmate		
Schoolmate		
Friend (In Class)		
Friend (In School)		

III. CLASS

Picture	Type?	Whose?

SECTION B: PLACES

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

a. Classroom

Picture	Type?	Whose?

b.

Gymnasium	
Library	

II. NON-INSTRUCTIONAL

Nurse's Office		School Office	
Principal's Office		School Service Office	
Pupil's Bathroom		School Exterior	
Playground		School Interior	

SECTION C: THINGS

School Decoration		School Equipment	
School Pet		Class Pet	
Student Work		Classroom Pet	

SECTION D: OTHER

Picture	Theme	Comments

SECTION E: COMMENTS _____

APPENDIX B

THE SCHOOL WORLD OF STUDENTS

WITH MILD TO MODERATE HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

Picture Sorting Handbook

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to help sort the photographs taken by students participating in my study, The School World of Students with Mild to Moderate Handicapping Conditions. Analysis of the pictures shot by these youngsters will not only help us in understanding the school world of students with handicapping conditions, but will also give us a sense of what the school 'looks' like to third, fourth, and fifth graders in general.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain the picture sorting process. The themes or categories established during a previous pretest are explained. The recording forms you will be using are discussed. On the day we do the categorizing, we will review the procedure described in this handbook. During the review, any questions you may have will be answered; if any questions occur to you while reading this booklet, please note them in the comment section. Once again, thank you for your help...it is greatly appreciated!

BACKGROUND

Third, fourth, and fifth graders, or youngsters age appropriate for placements in these grades, were asked to photograph their school. They were asked to:

"Pretend you are writing to a pen pal whom you have never met. In your letter you want to describe your school. You decide that it would help to include a

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group of pictures of your school. That is what you will be doing today - taking the pictures you would send in your letter."

The pictures they took are mounted on index cards. Under each picture is the photographer's description of her/his subject. You will be sorting the pictures according to the photographer's description, not according to what you think the youngster was trying to tell us through her/his pictures. Please don't try to read into the photos...remember, we are trying to 'see' the school through the eyes of the students.

THEMES

A. People

For each picture sorted into this category, you will be asked to record whether the person has been identified by name. You may find that a picture falls into more than one category, i.e. "My resource room teacher, Ms. Smith" falls into the groups "own"(teacher) and "special education".

1. ADULTS

a. Non-instructional:

1. Principal;

2. Service Staff. This group includes members of the custodial staff and kitchen staff.

3. School Office Staff;

4. School Nurse.

b. Instructional (Teachers, Aides, Assistants,

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Psychologists):

1. Own. Any teacher identified as "mine", including "my last year teacher";

2. A friend's teacher;

3. A relative's teacher;

4. A teacher or provider of special education including special class, resource room, and speech; and

5. A teacher in the school.

II. CHILDREN

1. A relative;

2. A classmate;

3. A schoolmate;

4. A friend (in class); and

5. A friend (in school).

Please be careful to record 'classmate' if the description mentions the "kid in my class". If the photographer indicates that the subject is her/his friend, please be sure to record this as `friend' and not 'classmate'.

III. CLASS

Included in this category are any pictures labeled 'class', 'group', or 'bunch of kids'. Please record, if the information is included in the photo's description, whether this is a teacher's, friend's, relative's, or own class as well as the type of class - special, mainstream, etc. Be careful not to record 'classroom' as 'class'.

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B. Places

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

a. Classroom:

Any room identified as a classroom, including the music room, reading room, art room, or speech room, should be sorted into this category. Please record, if you can, whether this is a teacher's, friend's, relative's, or own classroom;

b. Gymnasium and;

c. Library.

II. NON-INSTRUCTIONAL:

a. The nurse's office;

b. The office or work area of a school service staff member;

c. The principal's office;

d. The school office;

e. The students' bathroom;

f. The cafeteria;

g. The playground;

h. School exterior; and

i. School interior.

C. Things

A. School Decorations;

B. School Equipment;

C. Student Work; and

D. School, Classroom, or Class Pet.

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SORTING and RECORDING

The pictures have been grouped by photographer and placed into manilla envelopes. Attached to each envelope will be a recording form. Before you begin sorting the pictures, please fill in the identification information.

Each envelope contains between 1 and 11 picture/descriptor cards; each picture is identified by a letter and a number. You will identify the picture's theme by recording the card's identification code in the appropriate space. Write small...some spaces may end up containing more than one code. Should the card not seem to fit into any of the pre-determined categories, record it in Section D, "Other", and, if you can, identify the theme.

The sorting should be done independently. It is going to be hard not to talk about the pictures...but please try!

Attached is a sample recording form as well as a Comment/Question sheet. Once again, thank you for your help.

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